FRIENDS

OF FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK
AND GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE
WEBSITE REF: www.forestfarm.org.uk

ISSUE 64 JUNE 2007

EDITOR'S FORUM

by Sheila Austin

Hello Friends. It seems no time at all since the last Newsletter. Since then, I am delighted to say I have had several contributions from readers. (Please could I remind any contributors that they should include an address or telephone contact with their article and of course, for this Newsletter, be pertinent to Forest Farm).

The sunny dry spell brought some problems, as you can read in Reserve News, but also seems to have encouraged the number of Friends—and birds—on the monthly Friends/RSPB walks. There is plenty going on.

In this edition, we are printing a list of forthcoming events involving Forest Farm on the back page. It's quite a long list! We hope this makes for easy reference, and we look forward to seeing you at some of these events. By the way, the projects have not been forgotten. Volunteer workers on the Reserve have to be accompanied by a Warden or Voluntary Warden, so dates have to be arranged with this in mind. Dates will be published on the website, www.forestfarm.org.uk, or you will be contacted if you have already put your name forward—or still want to.

Some of you will already have seen the newly published leaflet **'Forest Farm Country Park'** - a great improvement on the previous one with lots of information and a helpful, clear fold-out map inside. Look out for it.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition. Keep those contributions coming! **Don't forget you can always have a copy sent electronically—you will probably get it earlier as well!** Just let us know.

Contributions for the next letter to reach the Editor by 6th August 2007.
For contact details, see back page.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewals for the current year are flowing in thick and fast.
The Annual Fee remains at £5 both for individuals, families and groups.
Many thanks to those who sent in more than the £5, which helps to boost our funds.

For those members who have mislaid their renewal forms, or whose mind it may have slipped, I have arranged for another slip to be delivered with this quarter's Newsletter.

The final membership figure for last year was 298 families and 1 Group—another record year.
Thank you all for your continued support.

Noel Gale **Membership Secretary**

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Reserve News

Paul Davies

After the recent long dry spell, the rain has returned this last week with some heavy showers. A week ago, the feeder actually stopped flowing and a number of fish, including Roach and Chubb have died. Herons may have well taken advantage of this unexpected supply of food!

I have had a meeting with staff from the Environment Agency; they have agreed to undertake some dredging work on some sections opposite the allotments area. This work may also include the creation of some deeper hollows so that in any future droughts, the fish will have a better chance of surviving. The main dredging will be around the top end and intake off the river, or 'penstock', as the apparatus is correctly known. This will facilitate a flow from the river even in the driest weather.

I recently heard some young chicks crying out for food from a hole some 12ft up a tree. I haven't seen the adults, so am not sure if they are green or greater spotted woodpeckers. The hole is too large for it to be the less common lesser spotted, which is not much larger than a sparrow.

We have had more vandalism in one of the hides, even to the extent of a nail being left pointing up through one of the elbow rests.

If members were wondering what the brown strip (now fenced) was in the 'two oak' field opposite the Warden Centre, I can explain. The area has been sown with a wildflower seed mix, which includes sunflower, maize, kale and quinoa. This is a biennial crop to provide the birds with some food (and some cover) as an alternative to buying in winter seed—although the Friends will still be doing this.

Finally, I had a phone call last week from Mike Wiley. He sounded in good spirits. So to all those who have been concerned, may I add that despite his recent ill health, I am sure he will be back on the Reserve before too long!

LITTER PICK 2007

This year's Litter Pick was a great success with over 25 volunteers spending a sunny Sunday morning working on the Reserve. Longwood Drive again was the major area of concern, with over 30 large bags of rubbish collected.

Can I thank everyone who attended for their hard work; **the total collected from the Reserve was over 40 large bags**. The Committee are working with the Council and local councillors to address the issues caused by the minority of people who continue to cause problems in and around the Reserve.

Martin Chamberlain

REWARDING

Rosemary Waters

I know that it is as important to supply garden birds with water to drink as much as various seeds / nuts etc., especially during the dry summer months.

Last year my daughter asked me what I would like for a birthday present. I suggested she bought the Terrazzo birdbath as advertised in the RSPB magazine. It is more aesthetically pleasing and a better size than the soup bowl I kept in the garden. I have placed it on the path near the bank and some shrubs for easy escape from predators.

Many small birds use the facility—Dunnock, Chaffinch, Blackbird, etc. They come to drink and bathe. In dry weather I can always tell when a bird has visited for a bath, as the stones around it are wet.

I was very amused last Saturday as I sat in the conservatory and saw a Robin enjoying a good splash around in the bath, only to be driven out by a young Blackbird. The mother hen earlier had shown her three fledglings what this facility was for. The Robin stood patiently by the side until the bath was empty. He hopped back in and was joined by a Bluetit, and they splashed around together.

I feel privileged to witness these moments, and find it very rewarding. I am waiting now for either the hen or cock Bullfinch that visits the feeding station regularly to try out the birdbath.

The Proposed Development of the Meadowland at Hailey Park

We have received a letter from Mr Peter E. Heron about this proposed development and its potential impact. The proposed development is at the north of Hailey Park. If you have concerns, you can get more information on the following website: cruhp@hotmail.co.uk

Editor

T-SHIRTS	SWEATSHIRTS	POLOSHIRTS
	(Range of colours for sweats and polos).	
Adults: **£10.00**	Adults: **£16.50**	Adults: **£14.50**
Children's: **£8.50**	Children's: **£13.00**	Children's: **£11.50**

Good quality. All with **FRIENDS OF FOREST FARM** logo. All profits go to Reserve projects.

Contact: **JOHN HARDING** (CHAIRMAN) **029 2056 3874**

MONTHLY FRIENDS / RSPB WALK

Phil Baker

The joint Friends of Forest Farm Nature Reserve / RSPB / Glamorgan Bird Club monthly walks continue unabated with friends new and old walking around the Reserve, observing the varied birds and other wildlife.



Little Grebe

Our February walk saw a dozen people set off on a fine morning, and with many birds showing fresh bright breeding plumage. It made for colourful sights everywhere, especially at the feeding station. The Little Grebe also caught the light, looking particularly pristine.

A satisfying total species count for the day of 29, with almost a full turnout for the Crow family—not just Jackdaws, Magpies, Carrion Crows and Jays, but 2 Ravens were chasing each other overhead.

They may well be the pair now nesting on the University building in the Civic Centre who have had to "move house" because the City Hall clock tower has been taken over by Peregrines!

Incidentally, the Peregrines are one of the RSPB's "Aren't Birds Brilliant" events this year, with a camera feeding live pictures from the nest to the National Museum from the beginning of April to the end of July.

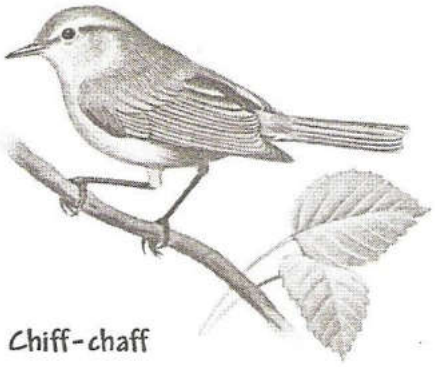


Raven

More details are available on the RSPB website

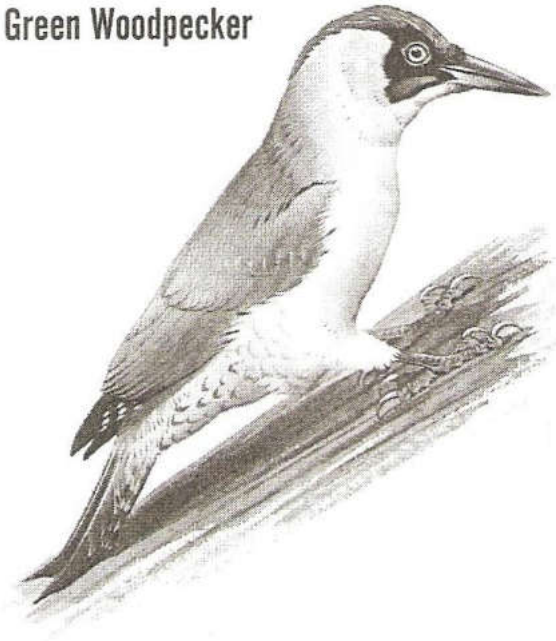
http://www.rspb.org.uk/brilliant/sites/clocktower

With Spring arriving seemingly earlier, our March walk was most enjoyable—it wasn't long before we heard the welcome sound of Chiffchaffs, one of our earliest migrants to arrive. An eager group of 31 people saw a total of 34 species, with good views of Kingfisher, Dipper and Grey Wagtail on the river. It was good to see both Nuthatch and Treecreeper, along with the usual selection of finches and tits in the woodland section. Reed Buntings again made an appearance for us.



Chiff-chaff

Green Woodpecker



April—no showers! - another good turnout on a fine sunny day. 28 people, including 6 children, set off; we soon saw Swifts and House Martins by the river, but also, right opposite in the field, was a Green Woodpecker playing hide-and-seek with us behind a lump of rock!



Kingfisher

The Kingfisher was patrolling the river again, and we saw a pair of Dippers from the bridge.

We also spotted an Orange Tip butterfly making its way along the bank.

The Chiffchaffs have now been joined by Willow Warblers, and Reed Warblers were singing in the reeds at the hides. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was also seen near the Canal, and we counted a total of 32 species for the morning.

Now that Spring is here and the days now lengthening, why not join us and enjoy the varied bird life at Forest Farm?

We meet at 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of every month, near the warden's hut, and everyone is welcome.

RSPB CARDIFF CONSERVATION GROUP

Doing Something Positive

Our litter pick in March went well, even with a depleted group. We filled well in excess of 10 large bags. Checking on previous litter picks, we have seen a slight overall improvement; may the trend continue.

Our first Knotweed cut of the season was on the last Saturday in April. We had a small turnout once again, but soon made swift work of the Knotweed, which seems to be confined to a few small patches. Is it our hard work paying off?

After the recent planting of 2 sections of roughly 40 metres each of mixed hedging saplings, it has been good to see some fresh growth already. So our other task was to hoe between our newly planted hedge. Remarkably, nearly 100% have taken—even those nibbled by the rabbits!

The wildflower survey is on May 19th. Any extra help would be welcome…..expert or novice.**

June 23rd	Balsam pull/second cut of Knotweed	Middle entrance

The group meets on a **Saturday** morning from **10.30 to 12.30** at **Forest Farm, Longwood Drive, Whitchurch**.

It is not particularly strenuous work—similar to an active gardener (you just work to your own level).

If you feel you would like to get involved, just turn up or, better still, give me a ring ...

Hugh Harrison 029 2070 4889

** *(Although this date will miss the publication of the Newsletter, I hope some extra help did turn up. Ed.)*

JAPANESE KNOTWEED (Fallopia Japonica)

Edgar Sapili

Over the next few months this most pernicious and robust of "alien" invasive plants will be roused from its Winter dormancy and start pushing its way through tarmac and concrete car parks, roads and private homes, as well as monopolising riverbanks, canals and waste ground.

But now, the fight against Knotweed and other invasive plants like Himalayan Balsam could be on the brink of a radical new twist.

Bio-control, or natural control, is the practice of releasing a known predator of invasive plants, gathered from its natural environment, to achieve partial or total eradication.

In the past, natural control has been resisted by the body of opinion that saw introducing one alien to counter another as tantamount to playing God. However, attitudes have changed as the alternatives seem unsustainable.

Previous controls by using chemicals such as Glysophate have achieved only partial success and have proved very costly. Swansea, which is the Knotweed capital of Britain, has estimated that it would cost £10m to completely treat the current infestation, with no guarantee of complete success. All Knotweed needs to regenerate is for a fragment of its underground rhizome, the size of a thumbnail, to survive. It will soon rebuild its energy for a fresh colonisation assault.

In its natural environment, Knotweed is not invasive and is usually confined to riverbanks and volcanic outcrops, and is constantly undermined by its predators, which prevent it developing anything like the size of vigour it achieves here.

Under strict quarantine conditions, scientists are currently putting three known enemies of Knotweed through their final tests. The three candidates are a stem-boring weevil, a sap-sucking insect and a leafy spot fungus; they have been exhaustively tested against British garden plants and crops and, so far, have all been shown to have an appetite for Knotweed.

The Environment Agency and Network Rail are but two organisation providing financial backing for the current experiments, and permission will soon be sought from DEFRA for the controlled release of one or more of the three agents.

In the meantime, control of both Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam in and around the Glamorgan Canal Nature Reserve is achieved by physically cutting back by Reserve Wardens in selected areas. Watch this space!

(With reference to the last paragraph, please see the RSPB Cardiff Conservation Group article on Page 6—Editor).

FOURTH ANNUAL SUMMMER COACH TRIP

To CARMARTHEN MARKET &The National Trust Property, Newton House/Dinefwr Park, Llandeilo On Saturday 28th July 2007

8.30am. Coach arrives at Canolfan Beulah, Pantbach Road, Rhiwbina Village.
8.45am. Coach departs Canolfan Beulah.
9.00am. Coach picks up from opposite the public car park, Penlline Road, Whitchurch Village.
9.10am. Coach picks up from opposite The Hollybush Public House, North Whitchurch.
The coach now travels direct to Carmarthen.
10.25am. Coach arrives Carmarthen.
1.30pm. Coach departs Carmarthen and travels direct to Dinefwr/Newton House, Llandeilo.
2.10pm. Coach arrives at Dinefwr/Newton House.
2.20pm.-3.30pm Possible guided tour of house/ deer park(subject to demand on the day).
2.20pm.-5.00pm. Self guided visit around the house and grounds.
5.00pm. Bus departs direct to Whitchurch/Rhiwbina via the M4.
6.30pm. Coach arrives Hollybush at about 6.40pm. then it goes on to Penlline Road, then at about 6.45pm. the coach will arrive at Rhiwbina.

PRICES: - Coach seats and entrance fees (we have a special group rate so there are no further concessions for seniors or children), £16 for non National Trust Members or £12 for National Trust Members (Please remember to bring your membership card).

CARMARTHEN INDOOR AND OUTSIDE MARKET. Dates back to Roman Times. Superb collection of arts, crafts, hobbies, books, antiques and fashions/accessories. You will be able to see some craftsmen and women at work. There is an extensive range of home cooked meats, home grown veg., plants and flowers, fresh baked bread and even local produced wine, fresh fish/seafoods, nuts, sweets etc. Not forgetting the friendly cafes.

NEWTON HOUSE/DINEFWR PARK AND CASTLE. Now reopened.The 18th-century 800-acre landscape park, encloses a medieval deer park that is home to more than 100 fallow deer and a small herd of White Park Cattle. At present work is ongoing to restore the Park's stone-walls. There are a number of scenic way-marked walks through the park that allow access to Dinefwr Castle (now owned by the Wildlife Trust South and West Wales), plus a wooden boardwalk and ice- house. There are extensive, fine views across the Towy Valley. The 17th century (1660) house, now has a Victorian Gothic façade, and a fountain garden, also a tea room (not N.T.)now in the old Billiard Room. The basement and ground floor is furnished c.1912. Here one can see, touch and hear about life above and below stairs in the Edwardian period. This is all part of an ongoing £5 million, 3 year restoration project, that commenced in 2005. The local Cardiff Association Of National Trust Members has financed a number of initiatives carried out at the house and gardens.

If you and your friends and family would like to join us on this trip please **fill in the form on page 9** and **send it with your cheque** made out to **FRIENDS OF FOREST FARM**, and send it to **Duncan Hockridge**, **5**, **Clos Cromwell**, **Rhiwbina**, **Cardiff**, **CF14 6QN** together with a **stamped self-addressed envelope** as soon as possible. Should you have any queries please contact Duncan on Cardiff 20626111 or send an e-mail to duncan3@hotmail.co.uk

MELINGRIFFITH TINPLATE WORKS

Mr David Clarke



As it may be of interest to Friends of Forest Farm, I am forwarding a copy of a photograph of the late Mr Albert King, the last manager of the Melingriffith Tinplate Works, taken about 1950.

Mr King gave me an old invoice dated 1775 relating to a consignment of tinplate signed by a predecessor Joseph Vaughan (the brother of my great (4) grandfather Thomas Vaughan).

There is a wall plaque to Joseph Vaughan, now a paving stone at the site of the former St Mary's Church, Old Church Road, Whitchurch. It is inscribed,

'In Memory of Joseph Vaughan,
Agent at Melingriffith Works,
Whitchurch, Cardiff

(in keeping with the Quaker tradition
of the owners of the works at the time)

To relieve the wretched was his only pride
And his spirit lean'd to virtue's side
In his duty prompt at every call
He watched and pray'd and felt for all'.

PLEASE FILL IN AND CUT OFF

Friends Of Forest Farm. Coach Trip To WEST WALES Saturday 28th July 2007

Name.....Address.....
.....Post Code.....
Tele. No.....

Please book me the following places on this trip: -

.....No. National Trust Members @ £12.00.....= £
.....No. non-National Trust Members @ £16.....=£
.....No. Guided tour around the House @ £3.00 for non-N.T. Members.....=£
.....No. Guided tour around the House @ £2.50 for N.T. Members..... ...=£
TOTAL..... = £

I/we wished to be picked up at Canolfan Beulah* or Penlline Road* or The Hollybush*
***Please circle where you wish to be picked up.**

RHIWBINA and WHITCHURCH FESTIVALS

Members of the Committee will be attending the Rhiwbina and Whitchurch Festivals again this year with our display board. In past years we have met many members and have taken the opportunity to find out what our members want from your Committee. This year we look forward to meeting as many existing and new members.

Rhiwbina Festival—July 7th Whitchurch Festival—July 14th

Martin Chamberlain

LOCAL HISTORY WALK on the RESERVE

On Tuesday 3rd July at 6:30 p.m. the Friends Committee will lead a local history walk around the Reserve, starting at the Water Wheel on Ty Mawr Road.

The walk should take around two hours and identify some of the remaining industrial artefacts, as well as enjoying the natural beauty of the area.

Martin Chamberlain

WHITCHURCH HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT

After many months of inactivity, an article appeared in the local newsletter suggesting that the NHS Trust were looking at alternative uses for the site apart from housing. The possible proposals include using the Hospital Meadows for the Health Service and not for housing. Whilst the Friends would obviously prefer that the meadows were not built on at all, building a new hospital would obviously not bring the same sort of problems to the Reserve as those from domestic housing.

The Committee are in contact with the NHS Trust to discuss these changes, and will bring news of any developments to the members in future Newsletters.

Martin Chamberlain

*(*The following is much edited from an article sent in by Ann Sullivan. The original contains much more about her family and their lives in this vicinity and during the war. I am sure that she would be pleased to share it with those of you who may be interested .She tells me it is also on the Whitchurch and Llandaff website. Editor)*

My lovely Dad and Melingriffith

My lovely Dad was Harman Williams, born at Melin House, Melingriffith, 5th August 1913. He was one of a family of eleven children born to Jennet Ann and David John Williams. Grandad Williams was superintendent of the Melingriffith Tinplate Works and they all lived in a very large house [had to be with thirteen of them!] and were locally referred to as Williams the gate, because theirs was the only house that sported a gate! and to differentiate them from the other Williams in the area.

As children they had an idyllic life at Melingriffith, learning to swim in the feeder, which was so clean then, and swinging from ropes on the high branches of the trees in the Long Wood. Dad said they were like Tarzans swinging through the trees out over the canal, sometimes dropping from great heights when the ropes broke! He said that on Fridays, when the men at the tinplate works got paid, the children would take buckets of spring water over to the men as they came out from work in summer months and usually they got some pennies for doing this - they only did it on pay days - how mercenary!

My Dad absolutely loved the canal all his life and when he was too frail to walk down there from Llancaiach Road where we eventually moved, I used to drive him down there on fine days and leave him there for hours. He loved carving sticks in the most beautiful patterns and I am pleased to say I still have one of them, and a beautiful photograph of him doing the carving.

The Water Well

I also have a delightful photograph of Dad when he was about ten or eleven years old sitting on the well opposite New Houses with all the other children in the area. The well is still there but now it's descended into a pile of rubble so I doubt whether many people know what it actually is. I feel it should have been preserved.

Les Gibbon and I are endeavouring to get the water well at Melingriffith restored to its original state and to this end, I am being helped by a Dr Edith Evans of the Gwent Glamorgan Archaeological Trust. When she came to Whitchurch recently to give a talk for you she came with me to the site of the well and asked me to find out what the original structure looked like. Les was a great help with this and I am now waiting to hear from Dr Evans as to where we go from here.

Ann Sullivan [029] 20657156

Events at Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Nature Reserve

Unless shown, all events are FREE. The Friends are always looking for volunteers to undertake conservation work on the reserve. If you would like to volunteer please contact one of the Committee or use the facility on the home page of the website www.forestfarm.org.uk

Date and time	Event
Saturday **June 16th** 10:00-12.30	Monthly Bird Walk on the Reserve. Meet at the Warden's Centre
Saturday **June 23rd** 10:30-12:30	RSPB Cardiff Conservation Group. Balsam pull/second cut of Knotweed. Middle entrance (Contact Hugh Harrison 029 2070 4889)
Saturday **June 30th** 10:00-12:00	Forest Farm Wildlife Watch Group (ages 8-12). Visit by Glamorgan Moth Group. Meet at Wardens Centre Ring 029 2044 5903 for further details.
Tuesday **July 3rd** 18:30-20:30	Local History Walk on the Reserve. Meet at the Water Wheel Ty Mawr Rd. Led by Friends of Forest Farm
Saturday **July 7th**	Rhiwbina Festival. The Friends will have a pitch there.
Saturday **July 14th**	Whitchurch Festival. The Friends will have a pitch there.
Saturday **July 21st** 10:00-12:00	Forest Farm Wildlife Watch Group (ages 8-12). Tree Investigation. Meet at the Warden's Centre. Ring 029 2044 5903 for further details.
Saturday **July 21st** 10:00-12:30	Monthly Bird Walk on the Reserve. Meet at the Warden's Centre.
Sunday **July 22nd** 10:00-12:00	Summer Wildlife at Forest Farm. Meet at the Warden's Centre.
Saturday **August 4th** 19.00	Birds, Bats, Moths and BBQ at Forest Farm. COST £4.50 PER PERSON. PLACES MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE. Ring 029 2044 5903.
Saturday **August 18th** 10:00-12:30	Monthly Bird Walk on the Reserve. Meet at the Warden's Centre.
Friday **August 24th** 10:30-12:30	Bug Houses. COST £2 PER PERSON. Meet at Warden's Centre. *ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.*
Saturday **August 25th** 10:00-12:00	Forest Farm Wildlife Watch Group (ages 8-12). Big Bug Hunt. Meet at Warden's Centre. Ring 029 2044 5903 for further details.
Saturday **September 1st** 18:00	Foods of the Forest. COST £2 PER PERSON. Warden's Centre . *ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.*

Layout by **Robin Sotheby**

Published on behalf of **The Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve** by

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Tel: 029—2061 4245

The Editor wishes to state that all views expressed by contributors are their own, as is the responsibility for them.